

## Cowboy cadets learn helicopter safety

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Contributing Writer

The OSU Army ROTC cadets flew over Stillwater to Perkins and near the Cimarron River on Friday in an Oklahoma National Guard cargo helicopter for a field exercise.

The Cowboy Battalion flew at various speeds and altitudes as part of the training exercise.

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Hensley, a professor of military science for the ROTC program, said the purpose of the exercise was to show military essentials, safety measures and to have a fun training experience.

Hensley said some of the main things focused on during the exercise were boarding actions that included an orientation over on and-off load procedures and fundamental safety concerns.

"We want to make sure cadets understand the basic safety issues in and out of the aircraft," Hensley said.

David Grojean, an OSU cadet and aviation management major, said it was his first time in a helicopter.

"My favorite part of the flight was changing altitude and hovering over the Cimarron River," he said.

Grojean said the whole thing just gives you butterflies in your stomach.

Michael Lynch, supervising secretary for the ROTC detachment, said the CH-47 Chinook helicopter used in the exercise carries cargo and troops over long distances.

Hensley said the helicopter has gained some recent fame for the role it has played in Afghanistan by being able to operate in high altitudes where the air is thinner.

"The helicopter has a top speed of 195 mph and is capable of holding up to 33 personnel inside," he said.

Hensley said despite the helicopter's massive size it is one of the fastest helicopters in the U.S. military.

Troops can rappel and even fast rope from the aircraft if necessary, he said.

Hensley said pilots flew the cargo helicopter from Tulsa to participate in the exercise.

"The helicopter we're using is flown by the Oklahoma Thunderbird National Guard," he said.

Lynch said the 45th Thunderbird division is legendary and has participated in many wars over the years.

"We're happy they allowed us to use their equipment today," he said. Hensley said the main objectives were achieved through the exercise. "The most important thing is that the cadets learn the procedures of the aircraft and overall have a good time," he said.

Oklahoma State University

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Photo by Stuard Stegall/ O'Collegian

Army ROTC cadets take a knee and look as an Oklahoma Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook takes off Friday afternoon west of McElroy and Western. The future officers took a ride in the helicopter around Stillwater as part of their training.